



Inside CFSA

For Our Child-Serving Community

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Court Monitor Recommends Ending CFSA Probation ***Council for Court Excellence Also Sees Progress***

In a report provided to the U.S. District Court Oct. 1, the Court Monitor appointed under the *LaShawn A. v. Williams* lawsuit recommended an end to a one-year probationary period for CFSA. The report stated, "CFSA has met the agreed-upon level of performance . . . for 75% of the performance period probationary standards. . . . This is a significant positive accomplishment for CFSA."

Mayor's Comments

During a press conference Oct. 3, Mayor Anthony A. Williams praised Director Olivia Golden and CFSA staff for their hard work.

"This report is a fair and independent assessment of CFSA's status today, and it represents a major milestone--one that means a great deal to me personally," Mayor Williams said. "It reaffirms my commitment to demonstrating that we can reform key agencies under District control rather than having the courts operate them, as happened often in the past. Although we obviously have a long way to go, this report also shows that in just one year under District control, CFSA has made measurable progress in protecting abused and neglected children and improving their well being and stability."

Improvements for Children

Among CFSA's performance achievements, four areas stand out for their benefits to children.

- ✓ **Investigations:** CFSA reduced a backlog of more than 800 incomplete investigations to 263 while assuming responsibility for investigating child abuse allegations from the Metropolitan Police Department and continuing to investigate reports of child neglect.
- ✓ **Case Plans:** CFSA increased the proportion of foster children with current case plans from 25 percent to 54 percent and the proportion of those in kinship care or being monitored at home with current case plans from 9 percent to 47 percent.
- ✓ **Group Care:** To reduce the number of children in congregate care, CFSA closed three emergency shelters several months ago and reduced by half the total number of children under age six in group homes. CFSA has also reduced the number of children who are placed in residential settings more than 100 miles from the District.
- ✓ **Adoptions:** CFSA increased the number of finalized adoptions to 330 during the year ending May 31,

2002, a 21 percent increase from the previous 12-month period.

If U.S. District Court adopts the recommendation to end CFSA's probationary period, the next step will involve developing an implementation plan for meeting requirements of the *LaShawn* Modified Final Order. ■

Child Welfare Improving in D.C., Says Council for Court Excellence

The District is making progress in improving its child abuse and neglect and foster care systems but still has a long way to go to bring service up to federal and local statutory requirements. This is the conclusion of a report released by CCE at a press conference Oct. 22. It looks at progress made jointly by the Superior Court's Family Court, CFSA, and Office of Corporation Counsel to meet requirements of the Adoption and Safe Families Act and DC Family Court Act. CCE Board Chairman Steve Harlan cited three areas of significant improvement:

- All three agencies are better organized and better funded to meet their responsibilities.
- Agency leaders are working closely together to plan and implement reforms.
- Reforms have speeded up permanency decisions for children.

Copies of the report are available from CCE, (202) 785-5917, and will soon be available at www.courtexcellence.org. ■

Fifth Parent Conference Attracts 300

CFSA's Fifth Annual Parent Conference Oct. 19 attracted some 300 foster, adoptive and kinship parents to a day of informative workshops and inspirational speeches. Keynote speaker Shane Salter shared his personal story of growing up in New York City's child welfare system. Mr. Salter is now chief of staff to the Deputy Mayor for Families, Children, Youth and Elders. Throughout the day, parents gathered in small groups to discuss topics such as teen services, fatherhood support, health care services, and allegation support systems. ■

CFSA Public Information faxes this newsletter monthly to providers and other partners. To provide comments or to update your fax number, call (202) 442-6174. ■